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ROME New York

City of Rome

Downtown

Façade Improvement Program

Program Summary

The City of Rome, in cooperation with the Rome Main Streets Alliance Design Committee and Keep America Beautiful - Rome Clean & Green is marketing its façade improvement program to continue efforts to improve the physical design of our Main Street Corridors. The goal is to improve urban center neighborhoods where people shop and live. The program, administered by the City of Rome Department of Community and Economic Development, uses Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and/or NYS Main Street Program funding.

Projects must be consistent with Rome Main Streets Design Guidelines, the State Historic Preservation Office, the New York State Housing Trust Fund and any other relevant or applicable regulations/regulators.

Program Guidelines

- ◆ Façade Program applicants may be eligible for up to 75% of the total cost of approved improvements. Applicants must pay a minimum 25% of the total cost of approved improvements.
- ◆ Applicants can receive more than one grant (upon approval), but totals of all current and multi-year projects cannot exceed a total of \$25,000 per façade in grant funding.
- ◆ The applicant must be the property owner or tenant. A tenant must have the property owner's written approval for the building improvements.
- ◆ The proposed improvement project must be submitted to the Department of Community and Economic Development and reviewed by the Main Street Alliance Design Committee with representation from Rome Clean & Green, and a design architect (if applicable). Projects will be reviewed on a quarterly basis (March, June, September & December). Processing, approvals and project commencement may take up to a year, or more, due to long waiting lists for assistance, and design development.
- ◆ Applicants will receive project scopes and approvals in writing. Any changes made to the written scope of work, not approved by the Department, will not be reimbursed or paid.
- ◆ The applicant will be reimbursed, or the contractor will be paid (manner will be determined on a case by case basis) for up to 75% of the approved project only upon completion of the project, in total or in phases, and upon interim and/or final inspection/s by the City of Rome.
- ◆ Completion of the project must occur within two years of the contract.
- ◆ There is a \$500 application fee which is due upon application to the program. The check will not be cashed until the applicant is accepted into the program, following the end of the review quarter. The \$500 will be applied to the owner's match at the time of final reimbursement. If

the applicant does not elect to proceed, any project costs (i.e. architect fees) will be deducted from the application fee and any balance returned to the applicant.

Project Components Eligible for Funding

- Exterior painting
- Removing inappropriate or incompatible exterior finishes or materials
- Restoring exterior finishes or materials
- Recessing / reconfiguring exterior doors or entrances; new doors
- Repairing or replacing windows
- Signs (new, repairs or replacement)
- Exterior building sign lighting
- Display area lighting
- Awnings (new, repairs or replacement)
- Some roofing components (with special approval)
- Window boxes, permanent planters

Project Components NOT Eligible for Funding

- Work done prior to the application (unless approved as part of owner's match)
- Improvements not seen from publicly-owned space, as determined in the review process
- Security systems
- Non-permanent fixtures (e.g. outdoor dining tables and chairs)
- Business operations - business inventory, display fixtures
- Stand-alone ADA improvements
- Internally-lit signs

Design Guidelines

Copies of the City of Rome Downtown Design Guidelines and NYS Main Street guidelines, which will be used as a basis for project review and eligible scopes of work, will be available online for applicant review.

Grant Process & Approval

Questions should be directed to Rome Department of Community and Economic Development (315) 339-7643.

1. Applicant must complete Façade Improvement Program application (with available and/or appropriate photos, drawings and descriptive information provided by the applicant) to the City of Rome Department of Community and Economic Development, 3rd Floor, Rome City Hall, 198 N. Washington St., Rome, New York 13440.
2. Once the Planning Department and Design Committee have reviewed the application, the applicant will be notified in writing regarding the outcome of the review with necessary explanations

3. If a project is approved, the applicant must sign a Façade Grant Program Agreement with the City of Rome; provide evidence of insurance; and agree to the promotion of the project by the Main Streets Alliance, before the project commences.
4. The applicant must also sign a declaration affirming that for a period of seven years the premises will be maintained in good operating order and condition and no demolition or major alteration shall occur without prior consent of the City and/or the Housing Trust Fund Corporation. The owner must also declare that residential units associated with or improved by the project will be marketed and made affordable to persons of low income.
5. These grants do not have to be repaid to the City provided that the owner continues to own the space for seven years. The grant will be prorated and forgiven in equal percentage increments on an annual basis such that at the end of seven years there will be a zero balance. If the owner sells before the end of the seventh year, the remaining prorated share of the grant may be due and payable to the City within 30 days.
6. Commercial project components are subject to the requirements of the federal Davis-Bacon wage law for contractors and sub-contractors.
7. The applicant is responsible for obtaining all building permits and any other required permits for the work to be done. If pertinent to the improvement of the façade, funds can be used to correct identified code violations.
8. All work must commence within 30 days of written approval, and the total project must be completed within 60 days of the Grant Program Agreement.
9. Façade grants will be awarded based on a building priority rating system which takes into consideration the aesthetic quality and size of the proposed project; potential impact on the attractiveness of the downtown, the streetscape, and the particular building; visual prominence of the building and its location; proposed project's impact on the total visual of the building; and the owner's financial contribution to the project.
10. Funding is limited and grants will be awarded until all funds are exhausted.
11. As a demonstration project, program guidelines may change as the program evolves. Applicants will be subject to compliance as per the date of their Façade Agreement– not application date.

